

Stenographic Report of

HEARINGS

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Before The
Subcommittee on the Assassination of
John F. Kennedy
of the

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Washington, D. C.

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TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Wednesday, April 12, 1978

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 5:00 p.m., pursuant to notice, in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, the Honorable Richardson Preyer (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

PRESENT: Representatives Preyer and Sawyer.

ALSO PRESENT: Wolf, Hornbeck, Purdy, Flanagan, Wills, Genzman, Fonzi, ⁷³⁰³ ~~Haw~~away, Cross, and Svendsen.

Mr. Preyer. The committee will resume its hearing.

Mrs. Tarasoff, we appreciate your coming here. We will ask if you will stand and be sworn.

Do you solemnly swear the evidence you will give the subcommittee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes, I do.

— TESTIMONY OF ANNA TARASOFF

Mr. Genzman. Will you give your full name and address for the record?

Mrs. Tarasoff. My name is Anna Tarasoff and I live in Rancho Contento, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

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Mr. Genzman. At this time I would like to show you a document which is labeled JFK Exhibit No. 94. Mrs. Tarasoff, have you previously been shown a copy of this letter which is labeled JFK Exhibit No. 94?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. ^{Is it} ~~Is it~~ your understanding that the letter is a letter from the CIA which authorizes any individual who has executed a secrecy agreement with the agency or bound by obligations of secrecy to furnish this committee information within its scope and jurisdiction?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, did you ever aid your husband in his job in Mexico City in 1963?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Not in 1973, no. Let me make a correction. In 1973 is when we arrived. As I have said previously, I was picked up on contract in 1974.

Mr. Genzman. Did you ever aid your husband in his work in Mexico City before you were actually employed in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; I did.

Mr. Genzman. Can you explain to us what you did in aiding your husband in his job?

Mrs. Tarasoff. My main purpose in aiding my husband was to take on the duties of translating the English transcript for the simple reason that he has a little problem in hearing and if there is a slight dialect, even in the English language

1 it would be hard for him to pick it up. So, I was doing the
2 English transcript.

3 / His main duty was to take on the responsibility of tran-
4 scribing the Russian transcripts. Although I did the English,
5 he also reviewed it to be doubly sure that whatever I had
6 transcribed was on the tape itself. This would be a good
7 time to pick up whatever was on the tape also.

8 Mr. Genzman. Do you know the source of the tape record-
9 ings which you aided your husband in transcribing?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. It would be in the English transcript. Tha
11 would appear on any reel that would be sent to him for tran-
12 scribing.

13 Mr. Genzman. Were you aware of ~~whether~~ these tapes
14 recorded conversations?

15 Mrs. Tarasoff. Was I aware of the recording of the ~~the~~

16 Mr. Genzman. Were you aware of the location of the
17 recording of conversations?

18 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

19 Mr. Genzman. Specifically, did these occur at the Soviet
20 Embassy in Mexico City?

21 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

22 Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, at this time I would like you
23 to review four documents. At this time I would also like to
24 announce to the Congressman that these four documents are
25 included in the packet of documents which were given to them

before the hearing and the documents we will be discussing appear on pages 1, 2, 10 and 11.

Mrs. Tarasoff, can you identify any of these documents?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Identify? Meaning what?

Mr. Genzman. Do you recognize any of these documents?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I recognize it as being my husband's work because I knew his style of work.

Mr. Genzman. Were you shown these documents prior to your appearance here today?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. I refer you to the document labeled "P-2" and this notation that appears at the bottom right-hand corner of the page. Do you have that document in front of you?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It was marked what?

Mr. Genzman. P-2 in the very extreme right-hand lower corner.

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Recognize it as my husband's work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. What features on this document would lead you to believe that it was your husband's work?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I know it. He would always put the slashes indicating there would be something that he wasn't too sure of. Well, basically his style of writing, or typing rather.

Mr. Genzman. Are you saying then that this is a

transcription of a tape recording which you believe your husband to have done?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of this conversation aside from what appears on this document labeled P-2?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. I would next like to refer you to the document labeled P-10 in the extreme lower right-hand corner. Do you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. This would be recognizable. It does not indicate much of anything but I would say it would be part of his work.

Mr. Genzman. Would you say it would be more consistent with his work rather than inconsistent?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It is consistent with his work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of this conversation other than what appears on the document labeled P-10?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. I would next like to refer you to a document labeled P-1. Do you recognize this document?

Mrs. Tarasoff. As his work, yes.

Mr. Genzman. Are you saying then that this is a transcription of a conversation which your husband did in Mexico

city?

2 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

3 Mr. Genzman. Do you have any independent recollection of
4 this conversation other than what appears on the document
5 labeled P-1?

6 Mrs. Tarasoff. No; I don't.

7 Mr. Genzman. Do you have any recollection, other than
8 what you have seen on these three documents, of any conversa-
9 tions pertaining to Lee Harvey Oswald which either you or
10 your husband may have been connected with?

11 Mrs. Tarasoff. No. On these documents, no.

12 Mr. Genzman. Aside from what appears on these three
13 documents, do you have any independent recollection of conver-
14 sations dealing with Lee Harvey Oswald which were part of the
15 surveillance operation in Mexico City?

16 Mrs. Tarasoff. According to my recollection, I, myself,
17 have made a transcript, an English transcript, of Lee Oswald
18 talking to the Russian Consulate or whoever he was at that time.
19 asking for financial aid.

20 Now, that particular transcript does not appear here and
21 whatever happened to it, I do not know, but it was a lengthy
22 transcript and I personally did that transcript. It was a
23 lengthy conversation between him and someone at the Russian
24 Embassy.

25 Mr. Genzman. How long do you recall this conversation was

1 Mrs. Tarasoff. This conversation, I would say, at least
2 covered a page and a half or two.

3 Mr. Genzman. Is it your recollection that the person
4 speaking identified himself as Lee Oswald?

5 Mrs. Tarasoff. He definitely identified himself as being
6 Lee Oswald.

7 Mr. Genzman. Referring to the document labeled P-1,
8 is it possible that this is the conversation that you are
9 recalling?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. No. This would not be the conversation
11 that I would be recalling for the simple reason that this is
12 my husband's work and at that time probably the name didn't
13 mean much of anything. But this particular piece of work that
14 I am talking about is something that came in and it was marked
15 as urgent.

16 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall whether Lee Oswald or the per-
17 son ^{whom} ~~who~~ you later determined to be Lee Oswald spoke in English
18 or Russian?

19 Mrs. Tarasoff. English only.

20 Mr. Genzman. In summary, then, you are saying that the
21 document P-1 does not appear to be the transcription of the
22 conversation you are thinking of?

23 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

24 Mr. Genzman. Because it speaks of broken Russian as
25 opposed to the English language?

8
Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

1 Mr. Genzman. Because it is shorter than the conversation
3 you remember?

4 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes.

5 Mr. Genzman. Because it is in your husband's style rather
6 than your style?

7 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is right.

8 Mr. Genzman. And because there is no mention of Oswald's
9 finances?

10 Mrs. Tarasoff. That is correct.

11 Mr. Genzman. Mrs. Tarasoff, earlier you spoke of an
12 urgent request for a transcription of a conversation. Could
13 you tell us the circumstances surrounding this urgent request?

14 Mrs. Tarasoff. This urgent request either came from the
15 party that was doing the monitoring of the transcripts and
16 it came through and when these reels are delivered to us, if
17 there is any request it is also included with a 77 well, on a
18 regular copy of the whole transcript, it would be included with
19 the reels, "In number so and so there is a conversation. Will
20 you please handle this prior to anything other than what is on
21 the sheet originally?"

22 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall the names of the contact who
23 made the urgent request?

24 Mrs. Tarasoff. This was written on a piece of paper and
25 it was enclosed in with the reels. So, I would hardly know who

the particular party was who requested this.

// Mr. Genzman. What did you do after you received this request?

Mrs. Tarasoff. We went ahead and transcribed whatever was on that particular reel in the space allotted or space designated. After it was transcribed, we contacted whoever it was then. They, in turn, came by and picked it up. Once it left our hands, we have no knowledge of what happened to it.

Mr. Genzman. Was your contact the normal contact that you used or was it a special contact?

Mrs. Tarasoff. It was our normal contact at that time.

Mr. Genzman. Were the circumstances unusual in any other way?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Such as what?

Mr. Genzman. You have mentioned that an urgent request was given to you in conjunction with this tape recording. Were any of the circumstances unusual besides the fact that you got an urgent request to do this particular piece of work?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No. It was just a request that this was urgent and there were no other explanations as to why it was urgent.

Mr. Genzman. Was the fact that you turned the transcript over to your contact immediately unusual?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No, because we had done this prior to that. If there was anything that we felt was urgent we would

ways contact them. Then it would be up to the people at the
2 embassy to decide whether it was or wasn't.

3 Mr. Genzman. Do you remember any other details of the
4 conversation which you say involved Lee Harvey Oswald?

5 Mrs. Tarasoff. Well, for one thing he was persistent
6 in asking for financial aid in order to leave the country.
7 They were not about to give him any financial aid whatsoever.
8 He had also mentioned that he tried the Cuban Embassy and they
9 had also refused financial aid.

10 Mr. Genzman. I believe you stated earlier that the person
11 speaking identified himself as Lee Oswald in the conversation?

12 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; he definitely did identify himself as
13 Lee Oswald.

14 Mr. Genzman. On the basis of this identification were
15 you able to infer that the person who spoke on September 28
16 was also Lee Oswald?

17 Mrs. Tarasoff. Not listening to this particular tape or
18 the other one, I would not know whether it was the same party
19 or not.

20 Mr. Genzman. In any of your connections with the Lee
21 Harvey Oswald case, and I am speaking specifically of your duty
22 in the surveillance and operation in Mexico City, was there any
23 thing out of the ordinary aside from that urgent request that
24 you received?

25 Mrs. Tarasoff. No; there wasn't anything out of the

primary except they just asked that this was one thing that they wanted transcribed as soon as possible and turned over to them.

Mr. Genzman. Were you at any time asked to do a comparison of voices; in other words, comparing two different types to make an identification concerning Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No. It would be a rare occasion for them to return a tape to us once it left our hands. There was never a comparison made for voices.

Mr. Genzman. Prior to the assassination of President Kennedy, were you ever contacted by anyone in Mexico City to explain your connection with the Lee Harvey Oswald surveillance?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. After the assassination of President Kennedy, were you ever contacted to explain your connection with the Lee Harvey Oswald surveillance?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No.

Mr. Genzman. Did the CIA or the FBI or the ^{Warner} Commission or any other government body ever contact you?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No; no one ever approached us in regard to this particular circumstance.

Mr. Genzman. Other than staff members of this committee, has anyone ever approached you and asked you to explain your knowledge concerning Lee Harvey Oswald and the surveillance operations in Mexico City?

Mrs. Tarasoff. No, sir.

Mr. Genzman. Do you have any recollection of who your contacts were as part of the surveillance operations?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Well, we had so many different ¹/₇ you mean contacts at the period of all this?

Mr. Genzman. Yes.

Mrs. Tarasoff. The first contact was []. Our second contact, I don't remember his last name but I do remember his first, which is Rudy.

Mr. Genzman. Could you describe this individual whom you believe was named Rudy?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes. He was fair complexioned and receding hairline. He more or less always wore a beige sort of colored suit; an average build, he was neither light nor heavy. He was actually of Polish extraction. So you would say he had no outstanding features, really.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recall his hair color?

Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; he was a blond, what was left of it.

Mr. Genzman. Do you recall his height? Could you estimate his height?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I would say he would be just a little taller than what my husband is.

Mr. Genzman. How tall is your husband?

Mrs. Tarasoff. I think he is about ~~five~~ ^{5'} seven or so, or six, about that.

1 Mr. Genzman. Do you recall the age of the individual
2 whom you believe was named Rudy?

3 Mrs. Tarasoff. I would say Rudy at that time would have
4 been in his 40's.

5 Mr. Genzman. Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions.

6 Mr. Preyer. Thank you. Mr. Sawyer.

7 Mr. Sawyer. I have one or two questions.

8 Do you recall any other subject that was covered in that
9 conversation that you transcribed other than the requests for
10 financial aid?

11 Mrs. Tarasoff. That was his main purpose, sir, just
12 getting financial aid, because he had said that he was broke
13 and he wanted to leave the country and he was seeking financial
14 aid and he thought that contacting the Russian Embassy or
15 Cuban Embassy, I think, would be willing to finance his passage
16 to wherever he wanted to go. There was nothing ~~in~~ the conver-
17 sation was a repetition of questions and answers really, and
18 the party who spoke to him spoke in English, so there was
19 no difficulty in understanding either one of them as to what
20 they were saying to each other.

21 Mr. Sawyer. As you recall it, the net effect was they
22 turned him down?

23 Mrs. Tarasoff. Yes; they definitely turned him down. In
24 fact, if I recall, they finally got disgusted and hung up on
25 him.

~~sawyer~~. Thank you.

Mrs. Tarasoff. You are welcome.

Mr. Preyer. I have no questions. Do you have any further questions?

Mr. Genzman. No; I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Preyer. Thank you, Mrs. Tarasoff. We appreciate very much your being here. We will excuse you at this time.

Before we recess we have a provision that on the conclusion of the testimony of a witness, if the witness wishes to make any statement about his or her testimony or wishes to make any clarifying remarks he or she would be recognized. If there is anything further you would like to add or comments you wish to make we will be glad to hear from you.

Mrs. Tarasoff. The only thing I have to say is that after so many years, to try to rely on memory alone makes it rather difficult in not having other than these few documents to refresh your memory, it makes it a little difficult, really.

Other than that, I would say whatever I have said today here would be true to the best of my knowledge after so many years.

Mr. Preyer. Thank you. We appreciate your testimony.

Mrs. Tarasoff. I thank you.

Mr. Preyer. The committee stands adjourned until 8:00 tomorrow morning in this same room.

(Whereupon the committee adjourned.)